

Husband, wife do battle with demons

By DAVE TIANEN
Of the Press-Gazette

This is how Ed Warren describes his first visit to that infamous house in Amityville:

"I went down to into the basement," he recalls. "As a Roman Catholic, I knew the methods an exorcist would use in bringing about outward manifestations. I know it sounds pretty dramatic, but as I stood down in the basement of that home, I took out my crucifix and I held it up and commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to what was there to reveal its identity. I didn't know if there was anything at all.

"Within seconds I could feel a tremendous pressure pushing me down on the floor just as though you were under a waterfall. I had a smothering sensation. There were pinpoints of electricity — hundreds of them — hitting my body. I immediately understood what was happening. This was a diabolical infestation and attack taking place."

Warren then called upon Jesus for protection and immediately the pressure relented.

Self-described demonologists, Warren and his wife, Lorraine, are from Connecticut and have been married 37 years. They've been investigating the occult for nearly 30 years and living largely off lectures based on their adventures. Wednesday night, they discussed some of these incredible experiences in a slide/lecture show at the UWGB Theater. "Amityville was a picnic compared to some of the homes we've been in," Warren said.

He says he has conversed with demons and they have told him what his wife was doing 3,000 miles away. He describes having his flesh ripped by invisible claws and being picked up and hurled across rooms. He relates stories of excrement appearing from nowhere and room temperatures dropping by 40 degrees. He recalls seeing a young boy levitate up and down so fast it was impossible to keep count.

One of his most chilling stories concerns a Raggedy Ann doll.

Apparently a young nurse in her 20s had a Raggedy Ann doll she was very fond of which she called Annabelle. She slept with Annabelle and even bought her jewelry to wear. She and her

roommate would have imaginary conversations with the doll at the breakfast table.

One morning they were talking to Annabelle at breakfast when suddenly she lifted her arms to them. The doll began to walk and follow them about the apartment. When they came home from work, it would be standing at the door waiting for them with its frozen smile.

Eventually, the doll became violent. The Warrens participated in an exorcism and the doll is now in their possession.

Fortunately for those in need of their services, the Warrens make house calls. They claim to have participated in over 40 exorcisms on several continents and with clergymen of different faiths. All major religions have a rite of exorcism, Warren says. He estimates their success rate at 80 percent.

Warren cautions that he only assists at exorcisms. The actual rite must be performed by an ordained minister.

"I'm involved in about a dozen really bad ones a year," he estimates. "It's getting worse all the time. There's an influx of interest in witchcraft and the occult. We try to bring a warning to people not to do these things. Don't open a door to the supernatural. I don't know how many homes we've had to go into because of Ouiji Boards."

Apparently there are several ranks of demons ranging from merely mischievous poltergeists who fool around with your laundry to truly bad heavyweight archangels that do people in.

"When we go into a home where you see furniture levitating, where you see spontaneous fire, where you see people clawed, we know that

we're dealing with what once was an archangel," Warren says.

The Warrens say it is important to never directly challenge the devil. Apparently he's willing to take a dare and a lot tougher to beat than Charlie Daniels would have you believe. They say a young friend of theirs foolishly challenged Satan, and was incited to commit a murder over which he had no control.

Religious faith is what keeps the Warrens from being literally consumed by their work.

"From age 5 years until 12, I lived in a haunted house," Warren recalls. "I knew what frightening experiences were. My dad was a state trooper and he always said there's a logical explanation for everything that happens in his house, but he never came up with that logical explanation."

"So what I had to do was call on the invisible, the intangible for protection. Even at age 6 I knew enough to call on Jesus Christ, to call on the Blessed Mother, the angels and the saints. I believe that is why we are protected today."

The Warrens steadfastly defend themselves from attacks on their credibility.

Addressing the controversy surrounding "The Amityville Horror" they concede both the book and the film took considerable liberties with the truth, but insist the house was inhabited by evil forces nonetheless. They describe Ronald DeFeo's (the Amityville killer) lawyer, who claims to have made up the haunting story with the Lutz family, as a "Mafiosa Joe" and claim the family that subsequently oc-

cupied the house and denied the haunting, are an "obnoxious" group trying to capitalize on the success of the book and movie.

An observer at Wednesday's lecture asked the Warrens why they didn't produce the tapes and films they said they had as proof of their claims.

"I've got them right here, but we just didn't have the time," Warren said. "We had a problem not too long ago where I asked the audience not to record the voices and three girls did. The girls brought it back to their dorm, played it for their friends and at 2:30 in the morning we had to go to the dorm because things were happening there. If you want to see the evidence just watch the television shows that we're on."

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